

## Certification Process

All operators will be certified by class (“A”, “B”, or “C”) in accordance with the BLM FIRE AND AVIATION MANAGEMENT Department of the Interior TASK BOOK Certification Policy. Certification records will be kept as part of the employee personnel file. In addition, certification levels may be recorded in the Interagency Qualification Card System (IQCS), as needed, for those sawyers involved in firefighting activities. Sawyer cards commensurate with each level will be provided to each operator.

Chainsaw Certifications from other agencies, regions, and states will be recognized by the Montana/Dakota’s BLM for a maximum of **five** years from the date of last certification or by successful performance in the position qualified for within the given timeframe to maintain currency. Failure to provide written documentation of previous certification or successful performance results and date will result in revocation of the sawyers’ currency, and will require new task evaluations and position performance evaluations with a qualified certifier to reestablish currency.

Class “A” (Apprentice Sawyers) and Class “B” (Intermediate Sawyer) may complete the task book at the next applicable level at any time while certification is current. Work Leaders will forward requests for employee certification class advancement to the appropriate Supervisor depending on project need. Supervisors will forward these requests to the District/ Field Office Chainsaw Lead in advance, allowing time to plan and conduct training and certification. All operators will be certified by a qualified certification instructor according to the *proficiency level* exhibited by the trainee.

***The Interagency Standards for Fire and Fire Aviation Operations (chapter 13, page15) provides additional information regarding minimum qualifications and the certification process for BLM Chainsaw Operators who participate on wildland fire incidents.***

### **Class A - Apprentice Sawyer**

Employees certified at this level are required to complete *S-212 – Wildfire Chainsaws*, including the field exercises and will complete tasks required for completion of the “A” Task Book. The final evaluation for the “A” level saw operators must be verified or signed by a qualified “B” or “C” level saw operator. The field exercises will focus on hands-on chainsaw operation in the practices of felling, brush cutting, and bucking of material. Class A certification is primarily limited to brushing, bucking and felling in **the least complex situations**. The certifier has full authority to impose restrictions on apprentice sawyers, as deemed necessary.

The certifier may modify the certification requirements and/or restrictions at the request of the operator’s Work Leader to meet specific work requirements. Based on the trainee’s previous experience and the field examination, the certifier will determine if additional training is required.

### **Class B – Intermediate Sawyer**

Employees certified at this level will complete individual tasks required for completion of the “B” Task Book and must be evaluated by a qualified “B” or “C” level operator. The Final Evaluator Verification for “B” level operators must be signed by a “C” level saw operator. Class “B” Intermediate Sawyer certification is limited to brushing, bucking and felling material 24 inches or less in diameter. The qualified certifier has full authority to impose restrictions on intermediate sawyers, as deemed necessary.

### **Class C – Advanced Sawyer**

Employees certified at this level must complete individual tasks required for completion of the “C” Task Book must be evaluated by a qualified “C” level operator. The Final Evaluator Verification for “C” level operators must be signed by a state approved “C” level evaluator. Class “C” Advanced Sawyer certification is unlimited to brushing, bucking and felling material greater than 24-inch in diameter. Additional requirements to be a “C” sawyer must include experience in training apprentice sawyers in the classroom and field.

### **Class C -- Certifier**

State approved certifiers are DOI approved “C” level certifiers or USDA Forest Service “C” level certifiers. Individuals recommended for this certification must send in recommendation paperwork to the State Fire Management Officer for BLM approval.

Employees certified at this level shall be able to operate as a “C” level sawyer and in addition be able to certify others sawyers up to the “C” level and make recommendations for “C” instructors/certifiers.

### **Training and Re-certification**

Annual refresher training is required for all sawyers. The Chainsaw Lead should notify all sawyers of upcoming training sessions and ensure yearly refresher trainings are conducted.

Class A, B, and C Sawyers and instructors that are unable to provide written documentation of successful performance in the last five years, will re-certify with a qualified certifier by position performance evaluations to maintain currency.

Re-certification accomplished by personnel from either the DOI or FS will be honored by the employee’s home agency. Sawyers will perform duties under the re-certification requirements in effect at the home agency at the time of re-certification.

Tree diameter limit is not the only measure of an employee’s skill when engaging in felling, limbing and bucking activities. Emphasis is also placed on knowledge and demonstrated ability. The qualified certifier has full authority to impose restrictions on sawyers, as deemed necessary with the level of an individual’s ability. Additionally, a good understanding of situational awareness must be demonstrated by the individual sawyer. The refresher training shall include but not be limited to the following areas:

- General safety
- Equipment and standards
- Educational resources and materials
- Field exercises (tailored to group i.e. fire line construction)
- Fatigue (can affect good judgment)
- Time of day